United Nations A/68/PV.32

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

32nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 9 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/504)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that when the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee. I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/5).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda items 14 and 118 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/68/L.4)

The President: Members will recall that under agenda items 14 and 118, the Assembly adopted resolution 68/1 at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September. Members are reminded that the debate on agenda item 14 and agenda item 118 will be held jointly with item 125, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", on 20 November.

Permit me now to make a statement.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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It is my pleasure to present for adoption the outcome document that was endorsed by Heads of State and Government and heads of delegations at last week's special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the outset, I wish to highlight that this outcome document is, first and foremost, a call for action in the accelerated commitment to address the gaps and unevenness in the MDG process and to respond to the formidable challenges that remain on the path to their fulfilment.

Many here will no doubt recall that at the special event I invited the Secretary-General to compile a matrix of commitments pledged by Member States, international organizations, private-sector partners and civil society associated with the acceleration of the achievement of the MDGs. The final results will soon be made available, but initially several billion dollars have been mobilized, and actions and pledges are coming from dozens of countries. With some 825 days to go, we must remain vigilant in our collective quest to fulfil the MDGs.

The document before the Assembly for adoption also sets the initial signposts to define an ambitious and inclusive post-2015 development agenda. Our collective commitment to this text should catalyse a final push to create real and meaningful change by making further progress on the MDGs and defining the contours of a development agenda with the potential to have an impact on the trajectory of sustainable development for decades to come.

Such an agreement required a collective sense of partnership by all parties. I pay special tribute to participants' collective efforts under the able leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and South Africa, whom I wish to commend today for their tireless efforts. I wish also to highlight the invaluable stewardship of our Secretary-General and his dedicated team for their efforts aimed at ensuring a systemic commitment to an integrated development framework.

I readily acknowledge the fact that this outcome document, however significant, represents just a first step in a series of efforts that will require us to work collectively between now and 2015 if we are to achieve the dual goals of fulfilling the remaining MDGs and launching a successor arrangement that is the post-2015 development agenda.

Today more than ever the depth, breadth and scope of these twin challenges require our concerted efforts and collective action. That means that new levels of support, collaboration and partnership will be needed from all stakeholders. Earlier this week we heard how reliable financing will be critical in driving this dual-track process. Countries will need to make every effort to mobilize domestic resources, yet at the same time there is a vital role and need for donor countries to meet their official development assistance commitments, including through the provision of reliable and timely financial resources.

During this session of the General Assembly, a number of ongoing processes will begin to converge in preparation for consideration and, ultimately, negotiations at the start of the sixty-ninth session. The outcome document speaks to these processes, emphasizing the need to achieve meaningful, balanced and forward-looking arrangements and results within the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, and in the process to develop options for a mechanism facilitating the transfer of technology. My team and I stand ready to provide assistance in this collective quest as the Assembly makes progress in all these areas.

The document also underscores that the preparation for the post-2015 development agenda will benefit from the three high-level events and the three thematic debates I will convene during the second part of the sixty-eighth session. My team and I will endeavour to make them complementary and mutually reinforcing so as to enable further progress on each and every one of the priority areas I have identified, all of which are reflected in the outcome document.

While there is much to be done, we can now say that we have begun the intergovernmental process aimed at putting in place a post-2015 development agenda, which will require sustained and committed work from each and every member. This is indeed an exciting time for our United Nations. I welcome the adoption of this resolution, and I look forward to setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda together with all in the Assembly.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals". In connection

with the draft resolution, I shall give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals", I wish to put on record, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the following statement on the financial implications, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In operative paragraph 26 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the President of the General Assembly to convene, in a timely manner, intergovernmental consultations to achieve agreement on organizational modalities for a summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. Under the terms of paragraph 26, the decision on the organizational aspects and the dates of the summit are yet to be determined. Therefore, in the absence of modalities for meetings and documentation of the summit, it is not possible at present to determine the conference servicing requirements. Thus, as soon as specific decisions on the dates, format, scope and modalities are determined, the matter will be reported to the Assembly in accordance with rule 153 of its rules of procedure.

The date of the meeting will have to be determined in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/68/L.4, the Secretary-General will submit details of the financial implications, if applicable, in accordance with established procedures when the modalities of the meeting are determined.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/68/L.4 was adopted (resolution 68/6).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/6.

First let me express the Group's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for submitting the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for its adoption today by the General Assembly. I wish also to convey the Group's appreciation to the co-facilitators of the consultation process for this outcome document — the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, whose tireless efforts and commitment have ensured that we have arrived successfully at this important occasion today. We wish to underscore the importance of this outcome document to us, as the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, and to the General Assembly in capturing our collective will as we move forward steadfastly towards achieving our development aspirations for this millennium.

While the Millennium Development Goals were focused on developing countries, what has been outlined in the outcome document is intended to result in the formulation of a post-2015 development agenda that is applicable to all. The road map set out in the document ensures that the international community as a whole is involved and engaged throughout in a transparent intergovernmental process to

> "craft a strong post-2015 development agenda, that will build on the foundations laid by the Millennium Development goals, complete the unfinished business and respond to new challenges" (*resolution 68/6, para. 16*).

During the special event, our leaders expressed the view that we should take advantage of this historic opportunity to reaffirm our collective political commitment and redouble our efforts to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs with a sense of urgency and determination.

As we set our sights on the framework that will take us beyond 2015, it is important that we reaffirm our resolve that our work must remain guided by the principles and values enshrined in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex), and the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

We wish also to reiterate that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is of paramount importance as a guiding principle in crafting the future development agenda. As developing countries, we reaffirm our conviction that the new development agenda must take into account our differing national circumstances and development priorities.

In line with the request reflected in paragraph 26 of the outcome document — that the President of the General Assembly convene, in a timely manner, intergovernmental consultations to achieve agreement on organizational modalities for the development summit in 2015 — I wish to express the readiness of the G-77 and China to work with you, Sir, and our partners in making that a reality.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I make these remarks on behalf of both co-facilitators of the special event. It was a great honour and privilege for me and for my predecessor, Anne Anderson, to be appointed co-facilitator of the special event, along with my colleague, Ambassador Mamabolo of South Africa. I am therefore particularly pleased to be present for the formal adoption of the outcome document of the Millennium Development Goals special event as resolution 68/6, following its endorsement by our Heads of State and Government and heads of delegations on 25 September.

We would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank colleagues for their hard work over many months in coming to an agreement on this important consensus outcome document. It is one that we can be very pleased with. It makes very clear the urgency of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in all developing countries, and particularly in those countries most lagging behind. It calls for particular attention to be paid to the most off-track MDGs and to those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged. It highlights the central role of the strengthened global partnership for development. It sets out the contours of the post-2015 development agenda and a road map to 2015, which will help to guide our work over the coming two years, culminating in a summit in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

We have much to do in these two years. We are in agreement that we must achieve the promise of the MDGs. In addition, we will be working to craft an ambitious post-2015 agenda. We firmly believe that the MDGs special event and its outcome will help us in this important endeavour.

In closing, on behalf of Ambassador Mamabolo and myself, may I thank you, Sir, and your predecessor Mr. Jeremić for your leadership, and the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, conference services and others in the United Nations system for their assistance. Finally, once again, I thank colleagues for their advice, assistance and hard work in agreeing the outcome document that we have just adopted.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): On behalf of the European Union and its member States, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the way in which you chaired the special event. Let me also congratulate you on your decision to place the subjects that were on the agenda of the special event and the whole post-2015 issue at the heart of your presidency.

I should also like to thank the two co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, for their tireless efforts. Their work is greatly appreciated.

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution 68/6), which represents a key step forward and a good balance between the positions expressed over months of consultations. We welcome the fact that it captures in a concise manner key messages both on the final push towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the run-up to 2015, and on charting the way forward post-2015. The document is particularly valuable in underscoring that we face common challenges and have a shared agenda. It paves the way for a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous world for all, a world free of poverty.

We welcome the resolve to target the most off-track MDGs and that among and within developing countries, those that have been left furthest behind require our most urgent attention and support. We welcome the emphasis on the Monterrey/Doha framework on financing for development as a key reference point. National ownership, with each country bearing the primary responsibility for its development, and the mobilization of all resources, public and private, domestic and international, and their effective and innovative use will be crucial to implementing the future framework.

With respect to the road map to the post-2015 framework, we appreciate that key elements have been agreed and are included in the final text, notably the need for a coherent approach that integrates in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development, working towards a single universal framework and set of goals, and the reference to peace and security, gender equality, human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance.

We will continue to be guided by the values and principles enshrined in previously agreed texts and reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in principle 7 of the Rio Declaration.

We wish to restate our views on this matter. We underline that principle 7 is explicitly related to global environmental degradation and the respective pressures. Agreeing on the continuous relevance of this principle cannot be interpreted as its extension to the entirety of issues to be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. The world has changed dramatically over the last decades, including the nature and magnitude of our global challenges, their cause and effects, and our respective capabilities to address them. The post-2015 development agenda needs to respond to these evolving dynamics. The European Union and its member States are committed to addressing these evolving realities and responsibilities, and acknowledge the particular situation and concerns of the most vulnerable countries. All Member States must play their part in support of countries most lagging behind.

We will engage constructively in all upcoming processes whose outputs will feed into the preparation of the September 2015 summit. We still have a long way to go. The stakes have never been so high, the challenges never so great. But business as usual is not an option.

Ms. Robl (United States of America): We are very pleased to adopt this outcome document (resolution 68/6) of the special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The outcome document reflects the strength of our collective commitment to fight poverty, accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, and unite around a common vision for the future. We would like to express our particular appreciation for the excellent facilitation provided by the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, as well as for your own role, Mr. President.

Our consensus demonstrates the determination of Member States to reach common ground on topics that are difficult yet critical for the post-2015 development agenda. This will provide a strong foundation for our work going forward. As we engage in follow-on discussions we should be mindful of staying within the overall budget allocations for 2014 and 2015.

Mr. Ueda (Japan): My delegation also welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/6 today. The special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held two weeks ago was a great success. In that regard, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the co-facilitators, the Ambassadors of Ireland and South Africa, as well as their team, and the Secretariat for their hard work and tremendous efforts to lead us to adopt the resolution in the General Assembly today.

The special event and its outcome document provide a great opportunity to renew our political commitment to achieving the MDGs by the end of 2015. The special event also succeeded in laying out a clear work plan to integrate various mediation processes on the post-2015 development agenda with a view to working towards a single framework and set of goals.

We think that such a process is very important to formulate an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. We therefore look forward to fruitful intergovernmental consultations, including on an agreement on organizational modalities for the summit guided by you, Mr. President, and we will constructively engage. In this regard, my delegation hopes that the modalities of the summit to be negotiated and decided will be the most efficient and cost-effective.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): I should like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and registering our appreciation of the excellent work done by the two co-facilitators, the representatives of Ireland and South Africa.

I wish to associate my remarks with the statement and observations delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the outcome document and joins the consensus in that regard. In this context, I would like to stress the following points.

Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. Eradicating poverty is an

indispensable requirement for sustainable development. That was reaffirmed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development after extensive negotiations and was finally adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government at the Conference. We believe that this balance should be preserved and not altered.

The world has undergone far-reaching changes in the past two decades. Significant progress has been made in many important fields of development through national and international efforts. Yet developing countries are still facing serious problems in advancing their level of development and changing the unfavourable international economic environment. The number of people living in absolute poverty has increased in many developing countries. In facing these challenges, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the right to development, remain crucial as a foundation of current and future global development efforts, in particular for promoting the implementation of the global partnership for development.

My delegation understands that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities will continue to guide our work with respect to developing the post-2015 development agenda.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 118.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/68/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report, document A/68/1, to the General Assembly at its 5th plenary meeting, on 24 September.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). The report provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of the challenges and opportunities for this Organization. Indeed, there is a need for the United Nations constantly to keep up and adapt to changing trends as well as to anticipate and address emerging and new challenges accordingly.

ASEAN greatly values its cooperation with the United Nations. The adoption of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations in 2011 affirmed the mutual commitment to further advance and intensify the level of cooperation and to strengthen the framework of cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations. In this connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 67/110, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations". It identifies important points of cooperation that will help us to address global issues of mutual concern, including peace and security, sustainable growth and development, human rights and the rule of law.

ASEAN looks forward to the upcoming ASEAN-United Nations summit to be held on 10 October 2013 in Brunei Darussalam to review ASEAN-United Nations relations and to discuss its future direction as well as to exchange views on regional and international issues. We view this summit as an effective tool to strengthen the partnership between both organizations.

The theme for ASEAN this year "Our People, Our Future Together" is intended to highlight the important role that the people of ASEAN play in its community-building efforts to help ensure the region's future. ASEAN believes that each member State can prosper from the success of its neighbours, and at the same time individual and collective achievements will also contribute to the global development process. In this connection, during the recent Summit of the Group of 20 in St. Petersburg, Brunei Darussalam, as ASEAN Chair, affirmed the importance of achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. That very much remains a core ASEAN goal.

ASEAN also remains committed to establishing the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015. In this regard, we will continue to implement cooperation initiatives and measures that will support the free flow of trade, investment and people in the region, narrow development gaps and enhance ASEAN's competitiveness.

To achieve such inclusive and sustainable growth and the Millennium Development Goals and to move forward the post-2015 development agenda, ASEAN has also adopted the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration

on Youth Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship. That Declaration calls on young professionals to offer voluntary community services in areas such as rural development and poverty eradication, disaster relief, health, education and the environment, while at the same time supporting vulnerable groups and fostering entrepreneurial skills. In this regard, ASEAN notes the efforts of the Secretary-General in launching the "Global Education First Initiative" and the appointment of the first Envoy on Youth.

On security matters, ASEAN will continue to remain a net contributor to international peace and security based on the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. ASEAN upholds the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as an essential instrument for governing stable relations between and among parties within and outside the region. ASEAN welcomed Norway's accession to the Treaty in July 2013.

ASEAN supports international disarmament efforts, particularly towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. ASEAN will continue its engagement with nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter, particularly with regard to their signing of the Protocol to the Treaty without reservations and as early as possible. We also encourage further cooperation in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (2013-2017).

In addition, various seminars and workshops were also held in cooperation with the United Nations, in particular on conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and counter-terrorism.

On disaster-management and humanitarian assistance efforts, ASEAN established landmark cooperation among the defence forces of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) countries. This is to enhance confidence-building, regional capacity and coordination through the ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine Exercise, held in Brunei Darussalam from 16 to 20 June this year. That large-scale exercise, involving more than 3,000 personnel, enhanced practical cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and built trust and confidence among the ADMM-Plus militaries.

Additionally, ASEAN held the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise 2013, co-hosted by Thailand and the Republic of Korea from 7 to 11 May. That was one of the largest civilian-military exercises of its kind in the region. Besides that, we welcomed the Mentawai Megathrust Exercise 2013-2014 in Indonesia, which involved the East Asia Summit participating countries, from 20 to 26 April. The regional ASEAN Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise will be held sometime this month in Viet Nam.

On peacekeeping, the second meeting of the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations was held in Manila in June 2012, co-chaired by the Philippines and New Zealand. The meeting resulted in an initial database of profiles of the peacekeeping-related capabilities of participating States. With that database, areas of complementarity and cooperation can now be identified to help further boost the capacities of participating States, including in the efficient generation of forces for peacekeeping deployment. While the diversity of current peacekeeping operations capacity is a challenging reality, peacekeeping offers rich potential for furthering cooperation among States within and outside ASEAN.

On human rights, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration on 18 November 2012 in Phnom Penh and acknowledged that that Declaration was a milestone in the Association's efforts to promote and protect human rights in the region. We also welcomed the outcome of the international workshop on enhancing cooperation between United Nations and regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, held from 12 to 14 December 2012 in Geneva, as well as the outcome of the Intensive Learning Workshop on Women's Human Rights for the Regional and National Secretariats to ASEAN Human Rights Bodies, held from 18 to 21 March 2013 in Bali, Indonesia.

To conclude, we very much hope that the collective efforts of ASEAN will contribute towards the United Nations own work in promoting peace, security and stability, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth for all. It remains fully resolved to work closely to achieve those ends.

Mr. Misra (India): I am privileged to address the General Assembly today. Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

I thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. It covers a wide spectrum of issues and provides information on the activities of the United Nations. It also underscores the global and interconnected nature of the challenges we face and highlights the unfinished agenda of development and reform. It is important that the sociopolitical challenges in the West Asian region be addressed in an inclusive and peaceful manner.

With fewer than 850 days remaining for their fulfilment, we need to accord the highest priority to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Substantial progress has been made in reducing poverty, yet our gains and progress have been uneven and short on expectations. The Secretary-General's report points out that almost 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015. The eradication of poverty therefore must remain the core, overarching objective of the post-2015 development agenda, including under the sustainable development goals. The quest for sustainability will ring hollow as long as deep imbalances in the consumption of natural resources and carbon-intensive lifestyles in the developed world exist. The fact still remains that the richest billion people consume two thirds of the Earth's resources whereas the bottom billion consume a meagre 1 per cent.

On climate change, India remains fully committed to crafting an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive outcome to negotiations in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As we embark on the process of framing sustainable development goals, crucial issues such as that of resource mobilization, be it official development assistance, technology transfer, trade or foreign direct investment, must find appropriate priority and be enshrined in the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity. Insofar as our development partnership initiatives go, we are resolved to carry forward and expand our multifaceted and vibrant cooperation with Africa, including through the framework of the India-Africa Forum Summit.

Similarly, we will continue to build on our commitments for enhanced cooperation with the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States within the overall rubric of South-South cooperation.

Terrorism remains a grave threat to security and stability everywhere and extracts a heavy toll of innocent lives throughout the world. From Africa to Asia we have seen several manifestations of this menace. The international community has long acknowledged the ever-present and pervasive threat posed by terrorism. No country, city or region is immune from this global scourge.

Yet, regrettably, we have failed ourselves by continuing to procrastinate on concluding the comprehensive convention against international terrorism. It is time that Member States summoned the necessary political will to agree to the comprehensive convention against international terrorism as a sound legal framework for the fight against terrorism. We need concerted global action. Such action should be predicated on zero tolerance towards terrorism and aimed at systematically dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism.

India has had a proud association with United Nations peacekeeping since its very inception. More than 150,000 of our uniformed personnel have participated in this flagship endeavour of the United Nations. As peacekeeping moves forward, we must remain mindful of the challenges of operating in increasingly complex environments. Not only should the mandates be realistic, but their framing should be inclusive of all stakeholders in a meaningful manner. Ambitious mandates require matching resources. We also need to be mindful of the safety of peacekeepers while crafting such mandates.

It is also imperative that those who threaten and attack United Nations peacekeepers be held accountable. Cases where United Nations peacekeepers have laid down their lives due to attacks by militias and non-State actors must be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators of such acts brought to justice expeditiously.

We note with appreciation the initiatives to modernize and reform the Secretariat, including through large-scale business transformation projects such as the new enterprise resource planning system, Umoja, International Public Sector Accounting Standards, managed mobility of Secretariat staff, and the capital master plan. While each involves considerable investment, we see them as important drivers in modernizing the United Nations.

However, it is our deep-rooted conviction that the relevance of the United Nations ultimately hinges on a more fundamental reform of its governance architecture, which is frozen in another era that perpetuates the rights

of the "haves" of the mid-1940s. It is only through such governance reform that the United Nations can truly invigorate action on issues of pressing global concern, be it issues of peace and security, climate change, development, or human rights.

Let me therefore conclude by raising an issue that inexplicably does not find even a mention in the Secretary-General's report, and that is the important issue of Security Council reform, where intergovernmental negotiations have not made much progress in spite of a clear affirmation by an overwhelming majority of the Member States of the need for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

We need to build on this by immediately commencing real negotiations based on a negotiating text, as is the case in all United Nations processes. It is imperative to impart a sense of urgency and momentum to this process by pressing for a results-based timeline to achieve early reforms of the Security Council.

The year 2015, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations as well as 10 years since the Millennium Summit Declaration, in which our Heads of State and Government mandated us to achieve early reforms of the Security Council, will therefore be an important occasion to deliver some concrete results and an expanded Security Council reflecting contemporary realities.

Mr. Och (Mongolia): First, I wish to extend my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. I believe that our discussions, based on a thorough review and assessment of the work of the Organization, will stimulate new thinking on how we can scale up our efforts in response to the many challenges that the world community faces today, and in particular on ways of accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on the process of defining the post-2015 development agenda. In this respect, Mongolia welcomes the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the MDGs just adopted by the Assembly.

As the report states, the MDGs have improved the lives of billions of people and helped to set global and national priorities and fuel action on the ground. However, the report also reveals that unless we take resolute action, almost 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015. Mothers will die needlessly in childbirth and children will suffer and die from preventable diseases. Fifty-seven million children are not in school, and 73 million young people are out of work. Therefore we need more concrete action.

I commend the Secretary-General for his important initiatives, including the launch of the Global Education First Initiative, which secured more than $1.5 billion in commitments.

Mongolia makes every effort to contribute to international endeavours aimed at achieving the MDGs. Promoting literacy and education are among our priorities at the national, regional and international levels. As members are well aware, Mongolia initiated a United Nations Literacy Decade, which was successfully observed from 2003 to 2012. It is gratifying to note that the Decade was marked by steady progress, with millions of young people and adults becoming literate. While national Governments were the prime movers in this regard, development partners played significant roles. In the positioning of literacy as a human right and a means to achieve sustainable development in poverty reduction, United Nations entities provided various forms of normative and operational support. I wish to commend them — in particular UNESCO, the main coordinator and implementing agency for the Decade — for their dedication and continued effort.

Another initiative put forward by Mongolia at the United Nations became a General Assembly resolution on education for democracy (resolution 67/18). The resolution recognizes that education is key to the strengthening of democratic institutions, the realization of human rights and the achievement of all international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It invites Governments, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to promote education for democracy. I wish to take this opportunity to draw the attention of Member States to the importance of implementing that resolution, as we will be reviewing its implementation at the next session of the General Assembly.

While accelerating our efforts towards achieving all the MDGs worldwide, we have started the process of defining the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. My delegation greatly appreciates the steps undertaken by the Secretary-General in this regard. We fully share the view that the report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons greatly contributes to the ongoing process of consultations at various levels.

We believe that green and sustainable economic development should be adequately reflected in the post-2015 development agenda in order to address the widely shared need to work towards one unified global development agenda with sustainable development at its centre.

Like many others, Mongolia is extremely vulnerable to climate change. The country faces serious environmental problems such as desertification, pasture degradation, natural disasters, droughts, water- and forest-resource depletion and air and soil pollution. These issues have a negative impact on the livelihood, health and well-being of the nomadic herders and ordinary Mongolians.

Increasing consumption, economic growth and the rapid growth of the mining sector are obviously intensifying the pressure on nature and the environment. Both sound policies and joint efforts are essential to solve this challenge. Continuing efforts are being made to address the environmental challenges by establishing and expanding the necessary legal frameworks, organizing various meetings, holding round-table discussions and implementing national programmes and projects. In 2011, the Parliament of Mongolia adopted a law on reducing air pollution in the capital city.

Following the Parliament's adoption of a package of laws on environmental protection at its 2012 spring session, today 70 per cent of the country's territory comes under the special protection of the State. More than 25 national programmes on nature and environment-related issues are being implemented in Mongolia.

In 2010, the Government started the implementation of national programmes on water protection and combating desertification. In 2011, the Parliament adopted a national programme on climate change. Nevertheless, more effort will be required in the years to come. Mongolia fully endorses the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and will be working towards their implementation. One of the key messages that was submitted to the Conference was the need for an integrated approach to water-resource management. That message remains relevant and must be central in strategies towards a green economy. It was also stated that a regular reporting mechanism should be established for water-resource management that would assist progress and share information.

In line with that thinking, we could look at the possibility of elaborating a United Nations convention on water-resource management. That idea was expressed by the President of Mongolia during the proceedings of World Environment Day that our country hosted this year. I hope that it will be given due consideration as we continue activities to observe this year as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

The Secretary-General's report testifies to the fact that today the role of United Nations peacekeeping is growing rapidly. Mongolia has pursued an active policy in this regard, making its contribution to promoting the noble goals of the United Nations Charter. During the past decade more than 5,000 peacekeepers from Mongolia have served in different peacekeeping operations, including the one in South Sudan. As a follow-up to the visit of our President to South Sudan earlier this year, we are focusing our attention on issues of improving and strengthening our involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Today more than ever, we need concerted action to further strengthen international peace and security and to further promote our efforts on disarmament — nuclear disarmament in particular. I should like to highlight in this respect the importance of last month's High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, which has given great impetus to global endeavours to eliminate those weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the Nuclear Security Summit to be held early next year in the Netherlands will also further facilitate global efforts aimed at nuclear safety and security. My delegation is of the view that nuclear-weapon-free zones greatly contribute to hastening global and regional peace and security. To address other goals of nuclear disarmament, we encourage the establishment of new zones in other regions, including the Middle East.

As a North Asian country we are keenly interested in strengthening peace and stability in this region. We believe that Mongolia's proposal to start the Ulaanbaatar dialogue on security in North-East Asia would contribute to achieving this noble goal, and I wish to appeal to other countries of the region to consider that proposal favourably.

Recent days have been full of important meetings and events at the United Nations. I should like to draw attention to the fact that, during this year's treaty event, Mongolia signed two important agreements, one of which was the Arms Trade Treaty — a historic

achievement of the United Nations in recent years in the field of disarmament. In this way, we are trying to make our modest contribution to achieving our common goals.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my delegation's strong resolve to work together with other Member States towards strengthening the United Nations system, so that it remains an effective centre for advancing the development agenda, a valuable tool for maintaining peace and stability throughout the world.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report submitted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the work of the United Nations (A/68/1). At present, with the international situation undergoing profound and complex changes, peace and development remain the theme of our time. In a multipolar world, economic globalization and the emergence of the information society are profoundly transforming the world. Nations are more closely interconnected. Meanwhile, the international community is faced with a multitude of challenges. The underlying consequences caused by the international financial crisis remain to be eliminated. The instability and uncertainty of the world economic situation are still remarkable. The full recovery of the international economy and its healthy growth still face grave challenges.

The international security situation is complex and complicated. General hotspots flare up from time to time. International terrorism, cybersecurity and various traditional and non-traditional security threats are interlinked. We still have a long way to go before we can maintain international peace and security.

Over the past year, faced with a multitude of complex threats and challenges, the United Nations has been working actively to promote multilateral cooperation, with an emphasis on activities within its strategic frameworks; has placed economic growth and sustainable development at its core; and has played an important role in the fields of promoting sustainable development, maintaining international peace and security, promoting African development, protecting human rights, coordinating humanitarian assistance, combating terrorism, and promoting disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United Nations Secretariat has also made positive progress in improving its transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The Chinese delegation appreciates the hard work carried out by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretariat. To respond effectively to the multitude of security challenges and threats, nations must work together to give a full and important role to the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations are the bedrock of contemporary international relations and constitute a guarantee for international peace. The international community should continue to adhere to the important principles of rejecting interference in the internal affairs of a nation, maintaining peace, opposing power politics and aggression, and promoting equality.

The question of Syria is the focus of the international community's attention. In that connection, China welcomes the decision adopted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). China is ready to send experts to take part in the relevant work and to provide support.

A political solution is the only way out on the question of Syria, and such a solution should proceed hand in hand with the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. China calls upon the Syrian parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire and the cessation of violence, and join the process for a political settlement of the question. China hopes that the international community will build a consensus and promote the early convening of the second Geneva international conference, so as to end the crisis and start reconstruction through dialogue. We will continue to support Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in their good offices. China is ready to join all other nations in a tireless effort to achieve a comprehensive, proper and long-term settlement.

Cooperation for international development is at a critical transitional stage. The United Nations should continue to play a leading role in development. China supports the continued implementation of all of the Millennium Development Goals and the early start of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, with emphasis on the difficulties and challenges faced by developing countries, in particular by African countries, least developed countries and small island developing countries, so as to narrow the gap and rectify the imbalance between North and South.

The post-2015 development agenda should continue to take development as its theme and place the elimination of poverty and the promotion of development at its heart, taking into full consideration the particular situation of nations and their different stages of development, and should respect the path of development chosen by each nation independently. That agenda should contribute to the strengthening of international partnerships for development, adhere to the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and fairness, increase capacity and development financing, promote the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment, and expand official development assistance and technical support for developing countries, so as to create an enabling environment for the development of developing countries and provide a framework for international development cooperation conducive to developing countries.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable platform for maintaining peace, pursuing common development, increasing cooperation and creating win-win situations. It is also a community of nations that believe in solidarity and common progress. Faced with the challenges of globalization and the changing world situation, the international community has greater expectations of the United Nations. China will firmly promote the continued improvement of global governance and support the United Nations in its efforts to keep abreast of our times, respond actively to what is expected of the Organization and better carry out the functions given to it by the Charter.

United Nations reform should contribute to increasing the voice of developing countries in international affairs and to a bigger role for the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of nations to deal with global threats and challenges. The reform should progress in a balanced manner in the fields of security, development and human rights, and should contribute in particular to positive results in the field of development.

China has always advocated, supported and practised multilateralism. China has supported granting the United Nations a bigger role in international affairs and firmly upholds the status and authority of the United Nations. China will continue firmly to support the purposes and principles of the United Nations and is ready to deepen cooperation with the Organization. It will play an even more active part in the work of the various United Nations bodies and will promote the United Nations, giving more attention to the interests of developing countries in order to make a greater contribution to building lasting peace, common prosperity, and global harmony.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): First of all, I should like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his assumption of his duties as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. Japan looks forward to his leadership during the current session in facing the global challenges that the General Assembly is mandated to discuss, as outlined in the Charter, and reaffirms its commitment to contribute to his work. I should further like to convey to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon the deep appreciation of Japan for his efforts in guiding the diverse activities of the United Nations and for his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1).

The peaceful settlement of international disputes is a fundamental principle of the international community enshrined in the United Nations Charter. My Government is firmly committed to contribute to establishing the rule of law at the international level through, inter alia, its support to international courts and tribunals, as well as at the national level through its assistance aimed at strengthening domestic legal systems and human resources in developing countries. Furthermore, it is our strong belief that the idea of the rule of law is strongly connected with the enhancement of human rights, which is one of the three pillars of the United Nations. Japan will continue actively to contribute to international efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

Japan strongly condemns the grave violations of human rights in places like Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We support the efforts of the United Nations in that connection, which include the decision of the Human Rights Council to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Japan strongly welcomed the Council's adoption by consensus of the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and supports the activities of the Commission. Japan cooperated fully with the Commission when its members visited Japan in August as part of the investigation.

Japan, along with the European Union, will again submit a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to address the international community's grave concern, including with regard to the abductions issue.

As Prime Minister Abe stated in his statement from this rostrum during the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.12), Japan has recently chosen a policy promoting a proactive contribution to peace, which is based on the undeniable record and solid appraisal of our country, which has endeavoured to bring peace and prosperity to the world and emphasizes cooperation with the international community.

The world's balance of power has been changing rapidly, and new types of threats have arisen because of technological innovations. It is now impossible for any one country, no matter which, to safeguard its own peace and security acting entirely by itself. Japan will work to garner the trust of the world as a creator of added value and a net contributor to regional and world peace and stability.

Given those circumstances, the role of the United Nations will become even more important. The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the primary tasks of the United Nations. In that regard, Japan is fully committed to contributing to United Nations efforts by participating in United Nations peacekeeping operation missions and extending assistance to affected areas.

Japan is currently sending an engineering unit of approximately 330 people to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. Japan is also deploying two Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force destroyers and two P-3C maritime patrol aircraft in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia as part of international efforts to combat piracy.

Japan welcomes the work undertaken by the United Nations in the field of peacebuilding through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe stronger emphasis must be placed on the linkages between peacekeeping and development operations. Japan remains committed to ensuring that peacebuilding dividends are felt on the ground through the work of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

To that end, Japan stresses the importance of further improving coordination between the relevant organizations and the donors. In addition, we also welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to strengthen civilian capacities in post-conflict States, including through the launching of the CAPMATCH capacity-matching programme last year, in which Japan takes part.

Turning to the situation in Syria, Japan profoundly deplores the deaths of more than 100,000 innocent people. Faced with the scourge of that war, the international community urgently needs to address the appalling humanitarian conditions there. Japan will continue proactively to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and to neighbouring countries, now totalling approximately $280 million, which includes the additional $60 million pledged by Prime Minister Abe during the general debate,.

Chemical weapons must never be used again. Japan strongly urges the Government of Syria to comply faithfully and fully with the chemical-weapons elimination programme established under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Japan will provide extensive support and the greatest possible cooperation towards the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons.

Now is the time for the international community to seize this window of opportunity with a view to bringing about a political solution. The successful convening of the so-called Geneva II conference is of the utmost importance in that regard. I should like to reiterate Japan's commitment to working together with the international community towards an early Syrian-led political transition.

The special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), held two weeks ago, was a great opportunity to renew our political commitment to the achievement of the MDGs and to lay out a clear work plan so as organically to integrate various related processes with a view to working towards a single framework and set of goals.

On the post-2015 development agenda, it is essential that human security be made its guiding principle. In that connection, let me stress two points: universal health coverage and disaster risk reduction. First, we should aim at satisfying broader health and medical needs based on a people-centred approach that seeks to attain universal health coverage and supplement a disease-centred approach. Measures for vulnerable people, women in particular, are the key to realizing universal health coverage. We will contribute

to programmes related to universal health coverage through a multilateral approach.

Secondly, disaster risk reduction should be mainstreamed in the post-2015 development agenda, since a disaster can wipe out the hard-won achievements of years of development efforts in an instant. Having experienced numerous massive disasters, including the great East Japan earthquake and tsunami of 2011, we would like to share with the world our experiences and lessons learned, as well as various new disaster reduction technologies and systems. With that in mind, we will host the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the city of Sendai, the disaster-stricken area of the great East Japan earthquake and tsunami, in March 2015. I should like to ask all Members here for their cooperation in regard to that Conference.

In September last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/290, on the common understanding of the notion of human security. That was an important milestone for addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people. In recognizing that development, human rights, and peace and security — the three pillars of the United Nations — are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, Japan is determined to make further efforts to mainstream the concept of human security and build on actions to implement that principle.

During the general debate in September, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared his intention to create a society in which women shine. Women, peace and security forms one of three policy priorities of the Japanese Government. Japan is determined to redouble its efforts to promote the participation of women at all stages, including the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding, as well as to safeguard the rights and physical well-being of women who are exposed to danger in times of conflict. In that regard, we will also further strengthen our support for the activities of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The threat posed by weapons of mass destruction continues to be one of the most imminent issues that the United Nations and its Member States need to address. Japan has been playing a leading role in promoting the adoption of General Assembly resolutions that call for united action to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. In that connection, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of its nuclear and missile programmes is a serious threat to the region and to the entire international community. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization and to fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks in 2005.

With regard to Iran, Japan continues to cooperate with the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1737 (2006). Japan strongly believes that the full implementation of the related Security Council resolutions is of critical importance, as it provides a solid basis for the United Nations to promote international peace and stability.

The establishment of the highest common standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms had been eagerly anticipated. As one of the original seven co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Japan did its utmost to finalize that work, which culminated in the adoption of the ATT during the sixty-seventh session. Japan strongly urges Member States to sign and ratify that Treaty at the earliest possible opportunity, so that the ATT will come into effect as soon as possible.

It was regrettable that the Security Council failed to unite and act as one, before the recent adoption of Council resolution 2118 (2013), concerning the grave situation in Syria. The malfunctioning of the Security Council reminds us that reform of the Council is long overdue and is one of the most urgent tasks to which Member States should give priority. Based on that belief, the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Four met in the margins of the opening of the current session of the General Assembly. The Ministers reconfirmed their common vision for reform and stressed the need to intensify efforts to translate into concrete outcomes, at the latest by 2015, the commitment by the leaders at the 2005 World Summit to work for an early reform of the Security Council. In that context, Japan appreciates the emphasis Ambassador Ashe put on the matter in his inaugural address. Japan also welcomes the invaluable efforts made by the Chairman of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, and supports his proposal of a concise working document.

Regarding administrative and budgetary issues, the Assembly will be dealing with the budget for 2012-2013, as well as the 2014-2015 budget proposal. In order to ensure budgetary discipline, Japan will carefully

analyse and judge the appropriateness and affordability of all potential additional items in the current budget, as well as the proposed programme budget 2014-2015.

With regard to human resources management, including the proposed mobility framework and the common system, those items have a great impact on the future of the Organization, and Japan will actively and positively participate in the related negotiations. Japan expresses its appreciation of the Secretary-General's continued strong commitment to better management of the Secretariat and United Nations facilities.

I will close my statement today by reiterating Japan's intention to work closely with the Secretary-General in ensuring a more effective and efficient United Nations.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). The report, which covers a wide range of issues, testifies to the centrality and importance of the United Nations in addressing the myriad of challenges that beset the international community. The challenges are interconnected. While we try to isolate them in order to conjure up specific remedies, we must keep in mind that they are interconnected in so many ways. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Allow me also to present some of Malaysia's views regarding a few of the key issues highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

As the 2015 deadline looms, Malaysia, together with the rest of the international community, is making the final push towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General that 2015 is not the finish line in our quest to ensure balanced and inclusive global development. Rather, we will begin another chapter as we continue on our journey to build upon the successes of the MDGs and fill in the gaps where we have fallen short.

Malaysia is fully supportive of the theme of this year's session, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", which is both apt and timely. We trust that the theme will provoke serious discussion on the path forward towards international development.

In Rio de Janeiro last year, the global community reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development and adopted a comprehensive framework for action. With almost one billion people still living in extreme poverty and with income inequality rising, sustainable development will need to be inclusive and take special care of the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. The support expressed by all Member States in coming up with a comprehensive post-2015 development agenda has been overwhelming. Member States should build on that momentum and find the best possible development framework for every one of us.

Malaysia is following closely the progress of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as mandated by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex). In formulating the sustainable development goals (SDGs), we should keep in mind the interests of developing countries, especially the least developed countries. It is not intended that the developing countries should undertake the SDGs as a kind of conditionality or a set of new obligations that apply only to them. The goals should be universally applicable to all countries, including developed ones. Hence, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility enshrined in the Rio principles must be applied in a holistic way when formulating the goals. We should also ensure that the SDG process is coherent with the post-2015 United Nations development agenda process. The design, structure and choice of SDGs should go in tandem with what developing countries aspire to achieve and should be supported by our partners in the developed countries through the provision of technology and finance.

We wish to emphasize that the SDGs should not in any way undermine the achievements of the MDGs by 2015. We believe that MDGs and SDGs are not competing concepts. The SDGs, if correctly formulated, would accelerate the continuation of work begun under the banner of the MDGs. They should strive for greater economic and social inclusion and emphasize integration and balance among economic, social and environmental aspirations. There should be, therefore, a unified, people-centred development with sustainable development at its core and under the umbrella of world peace.

Economic growth and social development can only flourish under conditions of peace, security and stability. Unfortunately, the international community continues to witness the devastating effects of conflict and instability on the civilian populations of various

countries, including Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the occupied Palestinian territory. We must strive harder to find concrete solutions to end violent conflicts and create the right environment for nation-building and peacebuilding initiatives.

Malaysia reiterates its call for a Syrian-led inclusive political process to resolve the situation in Syria. We are against unilateral action to resolve the conflict, and we support resolute efforts through transparent dialogue and mutual cooperation. We join our voices to those of the international community in condemning without reservation the use of chemical weapons and call on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to explore all possible diplomatic options for peace under the auspices of the United Nations.

Malaysia regrets that another year has passed without any resolution for the people of the occupied Palestinian territory. Day after day, month after month, year after year, the people of Palestine continue to see their lands seized to make way for illegal settlements. They continue to see their families, including their children, displaced and forced from their homes. The plight of the people of Palestine must remain a top priority, and we fervently hope that the recent resumption of direct talks heralds progress towards a viable Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We express our strong support for international mediation efforts in bringing about a just, lasting and peaceful solution between disputing parties. Malaysia is a firm believer in resolving conflicts through peaceful means and has played a lead mediating role in resolving conflicts and disputes peacefully in our region.

In that connection, Malaysia believes that the principle of moderation is an important approach that can be applied in mediation. The application of moderation can contribute towards bridging differences, facilitating dialogues and resolving disputes, as well as towards sustainable development and stability. Moderation can also create harmonious relations by calling for mutual respect, tolerance, understanding, dialogue, compromise and justice. We believe, therefore, that moderation can be a valuable tool in conflict resolution, national reconciliation, peacebuilding and power-sharing arrangements.

Malaysia is also committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as a member of its Organizational Committee. We fully support United Nations efforts to pool all available and relevant resources with a view to assisting countries in their post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery, reconstruction and, eventually, development. To that end Malaysia stands ready to provide capacity-building assistance, such as through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, under which we have trained more than 4,000 participants from 14 post-conflict countries to date.

Malaysia continues to support the strengthening of economic development and political governance in Africa. We commend the efforts made by the New Partnership for Africa's Development and its partners, including the United Nations, in guiding the socioeconomic transformation of the region. Malaysia will continue actively to engage and explore potential partnerships in the African region in forums such as the Langkawi International Dialogue and the Global Smart Partnership Dialogue. Malaysia also has strong trade, investment and capacity-building links with the African continent and looks forward to enhancing those ties further in the years to come.

As long as nuclear weapons remain in existence, our collective safety and well-being hangs in the balance. I reiterate the call made by our Prime Minister here on 26 September 2013 for a nuclear-weapon-free world during the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.

As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, it is ironic that an issue as prominent and critical as nuclear disarmament remains at an impasse in international negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. The paralysis must be brought to an end, and we reiterate the proposals made by our Prime Minister for new perspectives to be taken into account in the disarmament discourse, including the views of academicians, intellectuals, think tanks and non-governmental organizations.

Malaysia views the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a significant milestone in international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms. The Prime Minister of Malaysia signed the Treaty on 26 September 2013, cementing our commitment to binding international standards that would contribute to reducing armed conflict and the misuse of arms. We call upon Member States to accede to and ratify the ATT in order rapidly to bring the Treaty into force.

Malaysia is encouraged by the Secretary-General's continued commitment to ensuring that the United Nations is able to deliver in spite of scarce resources. We agree that staff members are assets and that their development would undeniably assist in preparing the Organization to face the evolving challenges with which we are confronted in this day and age. Enterprise risk management, enterprise resource planning, also known as Umoja, and International Public Sector Accounting Standards are not mere words or abbreviations for us to remember. They are important administrative and management projects that will enhance the management and efficiency of the Organization as a whole.

My delegation acknowledges that there are limited human, financial and material resources available to the Organization because of the world economic situation. Given those limitations and the ever-increasing mandate given to the United Nations, Member States will continue to demand greater transparency and accountability. In that connection, Malaysia would like to see the completion of the capital master plan both on time and within budget. That is important, as the capital master plan will enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the United Nations through modernization in communications and improvements in the working environment for staff members.

To conclude, it is true that much has changed since the United Nations was conceived. Despite the changes and problems that we face, Malaysia remains a firm believer in multilateralism and consistently subscribes to the centrality of the United Nations, which has enabled the evolution of rule-based interaction among States, thus creating a predictable and stable international order. We sincerely hope that this session of the General Assembly will allow all of us to move forward in a concerted effort to address the various problems and challenges that are laid upon us. The Assembly can count on Malaysia's firm commitment in that regard.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Argentina would like to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of his report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). I should like to focus my statement on three matters to which the Secretary-General has devoted a major part of his report: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 agenda, Syria, and particular developments regarding peacekeeping operations.

Argentina takes a positive view of the Millennium Development Goals as a tool for organizing and promoting national public policy that brings together efforts to pursue specific, clear and concrete ends. National Governments have been the major protagonists in that progress, with the collaboration of the United Nations system and with the input, although not always sufficient, provided by international cooperation.

The current debate on the post-2015 agenda is very timely, since an international and multisectoral dialogue has been triggered on various aspects that will, no doubt, feed into the decisions to be taken in 2014-2015. But that process should not distract our attention from the pressing work that we must still complete in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals before the 2015 deadline. Many countries are on course to achieve them, but when we are talking about development and human rights, the task is unending and that we must sustain our efforts over time.

Argentina has shown that with clear ambition and strategies and inclusive development, major changes can become reality. Eradicating poverty is, and must continue to be, our central objective, and we cannot accept any pretext to avoid adopting that as the main objective for 2030. The level of poverty in Argentina declined by 87 per cent between 2003 and 2013, today standing at 5.4 per cent. The time to permanently eradicate extreme poverty is now. That will not be possible unless we reverse the current trend towards increasing inequality in the world. Deep asymmetries continue to exist between the developed and developing countries, asymmetries that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has described as structural gaps that are linked to inequality.

We do not believe that there is a single pattern for development, either our own or for other people. We cannot ignore the differences in the responsibilities of the various countries to work to achieve sustainable development. Each country's economic, social and environmental obligations at the global level should be seen as consistent with its level of development, its specific circumstances, and its different historical responsibilities towards the degradation of the environment, which means that we must clearly respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

Each individual State should therefore work in a systematic fashion to promote development, beginning

by ensuring consistency between its macroeconomic policies and its policies relating to the generation of decent work and social inclusion. The access of developing countries to genuine funding resources, including official development assistance, varies. They may be able to obtain increased funding from multilateral and regional development banks or to improve their access to markets for exports through agreements reached at the next Bali round, particularly in terms of agricultural products. They also differ in their ability to promote the development of human resources and adapt to climate change.

The commitments entered into should be broken down into specific aims and objectives for all, and not just for the developing countries. The implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8, which reflects the commitment of the international community to supporting the development agenda, has not lived up to expectations and that is, perhaps, due to the fact that it was not clearly defined with clear and qualitative goals to be reached. That is a lesson we must bear in mind when we formulate the new post-2015 development agenda.

The States Members of the United Nations must step up to the challenges that we have to tackle. We must get to the substance of the discussion — how to maintain and consolidate progress made through the MDGs; how to strengthen and complement them for the new sustainable development agenda, not forgetting that the task is to obtain results and not just to quantify them; and how to fund the new agenda and ensure that each individual State, whatever its development status, can take ownership of the agenda by adopting realistic achievable objectives.

Moving on to the Syrian crisis, the Secretary-General's report has revealed the shortcomings of the collective security system laid down in the United Nations Charter and has placed in jeopardy the very credibility of the Organization. Specifically, a divided Security Council has failed in its obligation to comply with the mandate conferred on it by the Charter. A few days ago, the President of Argentina raised that matter, placing it in the broader context of the need to reform the Security Council by removing the right of veto. She said:

> "When dealing with conflict resolution and management, if one party to the conflict, or an interested party, has the right of veto, that right necessarily becomes an obstacle to the resolution of the conflict." (*A/68/PV.7, p. 10*)

The Organization has recently made tremendous efforts to deal with the humanitarian fallout of the Syrian conflict and the fallout in neighbouring countries. But it is clear that no amount of assistance will satisfy the growing needs of the people of Syria unless a negotiated outcome to the crisis is found. We therefore agree with those who believe that the recent unity of the Council in dealing with the matter of chemical weapons and in addressing the humanitarian situation may constitute the foundation for a political and negotiated solution for the crisis in Syria that recognizes the legitimate aspirations and demands of the Syrian people and lays the foundation for lasting peace through the early holding of a conference on Syria to implement the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/523, annex).

Of course, war crimes, crimes against humanity and grave violations of human rights cannot go unpunished. The International Criminal Court has a role to play there. We must again stress, as we have done frequently, that the delivery of arms to the parties in the conflict must cease.

To conclude, I should like to talk about certain developments that have occurred over the past year with regard to peacekeeping operations. As a member of the Security Council, Argentina voted in favour of resolution 2098 (2013) regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, based on the concern generated within the international community by the continuing deterioration of the situation in that country and the need to ensure the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law and the rule of law, and the end of impunity, particularly in the eastern area of the country.

Argentina voted in favour of the resolution, but subsequently expressed its concern regarding the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade, and particularly its ability to use force in offensive action, even when such a decision, enabled under paragraph 9 of the resolution, was considered to be of an exceptional nature and would not constitute a precedent. My country believes that such a use of force would represent a conceptual change in the traditional concept of peacekeeping operations.

In that regard, with respect to including the dimension of the imposition of peace within the

concept of peacekeeping, even when justified by the circumstances, there should have been further broader consultations with all countries that contribute troops to the United Nations, not only with countries contributing troops to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That should be done bearing in mind the new tasks that might have to be undertaken and the impact that such a decision might have on the entire peacekeeping system. The principles of neutrality and impartiality inherent in peacekeeping missions are at stake here. My country supports the peaceful settlement of disputes consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other bodies.

Again, I should like to restate Argentina's readiness to contribute and continue to work with the Secretary-General in order to achieve a United Nations that is more efficient and better adapted to the new international realities.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): We read very attentively the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). Structurally, the report is organized around the three major priorities defined by the General Assembly in the strategic framework for the biennium. Substantively, it provides copious information regarding what has been accomplished in the 12 months under review. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for all of that information, which clearly demonstrates the efforts that he and his staff have made in discharging the weighty and delicate tasks given to them by the Member States.

We join the Secretary-General in expressing our emotional condolences to the families of the officials of the Organization who have lost their lives serving humankind and the noble ideals and principles in the Charter.

Regarding questions of international peace and security, the report summarizes the activities carried out by the Organization in maintaining and building peace, in conflict prevention, and in mediation in a number of parts of the world. We agree with the Secretary-General that prevention, peacebuilding and mediation are the best ways to prevent conflict situations from degenerating or becoming seriously bogged down. In Africa particularly, we support the Secretary-General in the efforts to resolve existing crises on our continent, but especially to build African capacities for peacekeeping on the continent and subregionally.

The Central African Republic merits priority attention on political questions. The report describes the assistance given to 55 Member States in building democracy and holding elections. We commend the Secretary-General for that assistance, particularly to African countries. On 30 September, Cameroon organized municipal and legislative elections in a climate of peace and calm, which was welcomed by national and international observers, a sign of the significant progress in and maturity of our electoral process, patiently established and constantly being refined by our Government with the assistance of bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations.

With respect to promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development, the report mentions the actions carried out by the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to promote the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the well-being of all throughout the world.

We also agree with the Secretary-General that climate change is a major issue in our age and that the time to act is now. The recurrence of natural disasters throughout the world, with Hurricane Sandy as an overwhelming and devastating example, striking even the United Nations basement, should prompt us to make good decisions before it is too late, at any rate before we have to pay an even heavier price, materially, financially and in terms of human lives.

The contribution of countries such as Cameroon to sustainable socioeconomic progress throughout the world resides, among other things, in an environmentally rational management of our forest area of 21 million hectares in the greater Congo basin, which is the second largest after the Amazon and a large reservoir for the retention of carbon and other greenhouse gases. It is an oxygenic lung aerating the world, home to rare tree species, rare and diverse flora and fauna, and a biodiversity that has multiple uses. If all of that wealth is going to be global, a partnership must allow those who have such things to enjoy them in a legitimate manner, to obtain a fair price for them, and to provide oversight, maintenance, conservation and regeneration.

Regarding development in Africa, which is a definite priority that is always underscored by the General Assembly, the report highlights the actions undertaken by the United Nations, in close cooperation

with the African Union, for the development of Africa through its support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. There is no need to reiterate that our continent has in the past few years reaffirmed its leadership in defining the future and the role that it wishes to have in the short, medium and long term in the comity of nations and throughout the world.

Programmes and projects have been developed for that purpose on the continent, subregionally and nationally, with follow-up measures, partnerships and strategic assistance partnerships. We have requested such projects, and we support the concrete measures proposed in paragraph 44 of the report, which states that everything has been done to ensure that the needs and priorities of Africa are given full attention as we think about the post-2015 development agenda.

The monitoring mechanism mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/293 will allow us to summarize the implementation of the commitments made for development in Africa. Resources for support are, of course, expected along those lines.

On the promotion and protection of human rights, the report describes the actions taken and the progress made and notes the shortcomings and disappointing results in some cases. In an area so expansive and diverse as human rights, we need to emphasize the need for firm will on the part of States to move ahead in that area. Cameroon is deeply committed in that respect, as can be seen by the progress made by our Government on the ground with respect to political, economic and social rights in developing appropriate legislation for children, women, the family, older persons and persons with disabilities, in our participation in international treaties and conventions and in presenting national reports in those areas and following up on recommendations made by the competent national and international bodies.

With respect to humanitarian assistance, the report provides detailed information on the total contributions received and their recipients. We commend the Secretary-General for the efforts made, and we would encourage him to move ahead, ensuring good coordination, speed and greater security for humanitarian assistance operations.

With respect to the promotion of justice and international law, the report notes a number of activities concerning the International Criminal Court, as well as specific international courts. The Secretary-General should have included in that paragraph of the report information regarding the dissemination and teaching of international law in a number of regions of the world.

On disarmament, the Secretary-General expresses, among other things and quite rightly, strong concern regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Cameroon is a party to the ban on such weapons and can only say that they should not be used. We worked for the recent adoption in The Hague of a resolution on that question, which was then amplified by the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), paving the way for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons. Beyond the destruction of those weapons, Cameroon supports the ongoing Russian-American initiatives aimed at finding a peaceful political solution to the entire Syrian crisis. Our peace-loving country is working for an Africa and a world that does not have chemical weapons.

On drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, Cameroon notes with appreciation the actions undertaken by the United Nations, as stated in the report. I should like to emphasize that acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea were the subject of a summit of West African countries held in Cameroon in April. That meeting enabled us to adopt unanimous measures to combat such acts vigorously. In fact, an interregional clearing house headquartered in Yaoundé was established. The United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral partners are called upon to provide assistance to the centre as needed. The partnership that the Secretary-General wholeheartedly seeks could find fertile ground for cooperation in the interregional centre.

Finally, on the strengthening of the Organization, the report emphasizes the measures taken by the Secretary-General to increase the effectiveness of the management of the United Nations. We need not reiterate that the Organization is the body that regulates our higher common interests, including peace, security, and the well-being of one and all as the most critical elements. The Organization tajes an integrated approach to management through its key instruments, including the strategic framework, the programme budget and oversight, and the inspection, investigation and assessment mechanisms.

The Organization's staff, as the Secretary-General has affirmed, is its greatest asset. In the past few years, the stability and predictability of all those factors have

been sorely tested, owing to global financial difficulties that have not spared the Organization. The Secretary-General has been constrained to do more with less. We hope that projects such as Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards norms mentioned by the Secretary-General will, in keeping with the time frame and goals set by the General Assembly, result in a long-lasting management culture, if the Organization is to survive in the information age of the twenty-first century, where it has to deal with actors that may be better equipped in those areas. Cameroon supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to modernize the Organization in the hope he will move forward in full consultation with and giving careful consideration to the views of all Member States.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First of all, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to extend sincere compliments to Ambassador John Ashe on assuming the presidency of the Assembly and to pledge our full support in the discharge of his important duties in that capacity. I look forward to celebrating his success, which will indeed be a common victory for us all.

I also wish to put on record our sincere thanks and compliments to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his industrious and successful stewardship of our complex Organization.

Our Organization represents the soul of human conscience, a monument to the united determination to make our planet a better place by all means and standards, and a vehicle for translating into reality our collective resolve to that end. The Secretary-General symbolizes the pinnacle of integrity, dedication, competence, judgment and overall coordination and leadership in the functioning of the Organization. It is with this fact in mind that my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report, as contained in document A/68/1, as an excellent window into the progress of the Organization over the past year in all areas of its core functions.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive analysis outlining the complex context of peace, security and development needs, resource gaps and other parameters of peace in the contemporary world, and the conclusions drawn therefrom, are pertinent and urgent, together with the actions that Member States need to take in the course of next year and beyond. On the whole, the Secretary-General has highlighted major global issues with insightful suggestions and provided a good basis for constructive intergovernmental deliberations ahead. My delegation commends the report for its clear articulation of serious concern over such development issues as the Millennium Development goals (MDGs), the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and how the most needy and most vulnerable of countries can be taken on board in our future development efforts.

Nepal has unflinching faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations, believes in the centrality of the Organization in all multilateral affairs, attaches great significance to each and every aspect of the work of the Organization, and takes seriously each and every point the Secretary-General makes in the report. In looking at what the Organization can accomplish directly and as a catalyst for peace, security, development and justice throughout the world, we believe the United Nations has no alternative except to ensure a more robust and reformed Organization, for which my delegation will be working closely with all in future.

Nepal has been contributing to the work of the Organization in different capacities, and most importantly in the United Nations peacekeeping efforts throughout the world, including in the most difficult of missions and at the shortest notice. I assure the Secretary-General of Nepal's continued commitment to participating in United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Issues of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, including climate change and mountains, MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, the development of the least developed and landlocked developing countries, international peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance, justice and the rule of law at the national and international levels, international cooperation to free the world from the arms race and weapons of mass destruction, drugs and terrorism are all very close to our heart. Nepal is supportive of the serious efforts being made to address the concerns and aspirations of small island developing States.

We are aware that no matter how we may wish to move ahead, we have to deal head on with the crucial issues of infrastructure development, capacity-building in terms both of hardware and software, resource mobilization, official development assistance, technology transfer, trade, foreign direct investment,

sustainable agriculture, tourism, international migration and development, to which we must accord priority.

The MDGs have been the most successful development drive in the history of the United Nations. The drive has brought the United Nations closer to people in the countries of the South. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, our leaders agreed to build on the success of the MDGs and to develop universally applicable sustainable goals for the future.

As we embark on the post-2015 development agenda, now is the time to stand by that resolve in the firm determination that we will not betray the bottom billion people living in abject poverty on any other development pretext, and that we will place humanity at the centre of development. The exercise of the post-2015 development agenda should rise to the challenge of facilitating the transformational shifts that the world needs.

While my delegation understands full well the time constraints facing us and the Organization, I find it important to issue a word of caution regarding the use of time between now and 2015.

The Secretary-General has outlined a plan for holding big events in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as part of the post-2015 development agenda exercise. It is important to ponder how that planning relates to the necessary, relevant activities at national level. We have less than 100 weeks to deliberate on all aspects of the post-2015 development agenda and to agree on a post-2015 development framework by September 2015. If we cut out weekends and holidays, that period will be shorter by one-third. While the job has to be full-time, given its long-term pertinence and urgency, it will be one of several responsibilities for most of the people supposed to work on it.

The resulting danger is threefold. The exercise may not be able to be adequately informed of the voices of all; the agenda may not be able to encompass or avoid all that it should; and the specific aspects of the outcome of the whole exercise may not correspond to the specific needs on the ground. More importantly, there may be a disconnect between exercises at the global level and those at the national level. We have numerous examples of agreeing on time-bound programmes of action — say for five or 10 years — and spending the first half of that period figuring out how it can all be integrated into the national scheme of things for implementation and follow-up.

Any recurrence of the same experience in the case of the post-2015 development agenda would be most unfortunate. Parallel efforts to engage machineries and all stakeholders at the national level right from the planning phase is important to forge a sense of participation, partnership, ownership, attachment and commitment, which are all essential to ensuring that the intended results are achieved, achieved in full and achieved together.

I therefore humbly call on the presidency of the Assembly and the Secretary-General to schedule the meetings and activities carefully and judiciously, ensuring justice and balance among issues and countries, as well as across themes and regions. That will help to ensure that all efforts at the national and international levels will go in tandem right from the planning phase, together with crafting financing and other mechanisms, so that we will be able to deliver what may be agreed and to evaluate the results afterwards.

With that fervent call, I reiterate my delegation's admiration for the dedicated and dynamic leadership of the Secretary-General, and especially for his personal, empathetic hopes for uplifting the downtrodden and needy, and our full confidence in his work ahead. Nepal looks forward to working with all Members to make the Organization rise to the challenge posed by our world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We commend the Secretary-General for presenting a very comprehensive and substantive report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). We all know that this past year the Secretary-General has worked hard to promote peace and security around the world, to shape our 2015 development agenda, to champion the cause of education for all, to mobilize the international community to deal with the challenges of climate change, and to muster support for sustainable energy for all. With the support of Member States, the Secretary-General and the Organization on his watch have made impressive progress. What is more, we all, because of our collective wisdom, seem to be moving in the right direction.

This past year, we also had the honour of receiving the Secretary-General in Pakistan, where he held an in-depth dialogue with our leadership and focused on issues of education, energy, disaster response and preparedness, counter-terrorism, and peace and security

in the region. His visit to Pakistan was memorable because he celebrated our independence day with the people of Pakistan.

If we look at the state of the world, we see five broad trends. First, the world has still not fully recovered from the international financial crisis, and that has a direct impact on the United Nations development agenda. Secondly, the social and economic development agenda in many developing countries remains anaemic. It requires the convening power and support of the United Nations. Thirdly, climate change has become a serious challenge for our globe's increasingly fragile ecosystems. Fourthly, conflicts are raging throughout the world, most of which we cannot resolve without the intercession and intervention of the United Nations. Last but not least, terrorism and other forms of asymmetric threats destabilize societies and pit faith against faith, nation against nation, and civilization against civilization.

Not all is dark and dismal. There are many positive trends. The Millennium Development Goals have made progress, although we have to go some way to meet them 100 per cent and that is what we ought to be doing. The United Nations is now preparing for the post-2015 development agenda to evolve and implement a development framework that deals with social, economic and environmental challenges in a holistic and cohesive manner.

The sustainable development goals must set the goal of the eradication of poverty by 2030. At the same time, we have to find a balance between economy and ecology, and we have to ensure that developing countries attain higher levels of economic growth and development. Our efforts will flounder if we do not have a strategy for financing for development. We need both traditional and innovative means to bridge the resource gaps for our ambitious goals for sustainable development. Let us strive to succeed in all these goals.

The agenda of the Security Council is dominated by African issues. The Security Council, the African Union's Peace and Security Council, and Africa's subregional organizations have been succeeding in the recent past in resolving some of the most intractable issues in East, Central and Western Africa.

Daunting challenges remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. In this regard, we applaud the Secretary-General's leadership in crafting the Comprehensive Framework Agreement, with the help of the countries of the Great Lakes region and the Southern African Development Community, to bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is a work in progress.

We also support the Secretary-General's efforts to pursue a comprehensive strategy for addressing the problems of transnational crime, resource scarcity, terrorism and political instability in the Sahel.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) to secure control of chemical weapons in Syria and destroy them. We hope that the consensus generated by the resolution will lead to agreements at the "Geneva II" conference so that Syria can move towards reconciliation and a transition acceptable to the Syrian people.

We hope that the resumed Middle East peace process will gain momentum and lead to lasting peace in the region and a viable Palestinian State.

For our part, we fully support the efforts to shape a post-2015 development agenda. Our new Government has taken steps to accelerate social and economic development, with a sharp focus on the revival of the economy, investment, trade promotion, energy, education, health, and disaster prevention. We are working proactively for peace and stability in the region. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met Mr. Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the General Assembly last month and made serious overtures to resolve all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan supports Afghanistan's efforts to initiate a peace process and to move towards national reconciliation and stability. The international community should continue to help Afghanistan as it negotiates political, security and economic transitions. In the meantime, the United Nations should upgrade and fortify its strategy for the repatriation of the more than 3 million Afghan refugees still living in Pakistan.

The Secretary-General has expressed disappointment over the lack of progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. I would say that some headway has been made. The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted last year. The Nuclear Security Summit process is moving apace. A successful nuclear security conference was held by the International Atomic Energy Agency earlier this year, and a High-level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament was hosted by the General Assembly last month.

We believe that the impasse in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda can be broken if we address four core issues — disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances — and pursue them simultaneously without establishing hierarchies. Similarly, barriers to access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be removed. We should adhere to the cardinal principles of security for all, non-selectivity and non-discrimination.

Our position on a fissile material cut-off treaty is determined by our national security interests and the objective of strategic stability in South Asia. We advocate a strategic restraint regime comprising nuclear and missile restraint, conventional balance and conflict resolution. Pakistan fully qualifies to have access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to become a member of export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Security Council reform needs to be pursued carefully and skilfully. This is a momentous process. Its results cannot be achieved through shortcuts or procedural moves and manoeuvres. Decisions in this regard must enjoy the support of all the Members of the Organization. The reform should aggregate and reflect the aspirations and interests of all, not the ambitions of a few. The Council's reform should make it more representative, democratic and equitable and its work more effective, transparent and accountable.

As the Prime Minister of Pakistan told the Assembly last month (see A/68/PV.15), we should plan for a dynamic future, and not entrench anachronistic, historical patterns and privileges. The Uniting for Consensus group recommends such a viable intermediate solution. Let us not forget that it is our collective responsibility to revitalize the Assembly so that it can play its rightful role for peace, stability, sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights. This is a new era. Let us not hark back but look forward.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate the President upon his election and commend the Secretary-General for his report on the different activities of the Organization (A/68/1).

Development is an important source of financing and support for many developing countries. In spite of the importance that we attach to other sources of financing, there is no substitute for public financing. We are concerned by what we read in the Secretary-General's report regarding a decline in official development assistance for the period 2011-2012. We hope that the developed countries will honour their commitments.

The Secretary-General's report does not take into account the concerns of the developing countries, in particular the implementation of the promises and commitments already made, in particular on how to implement the fact that developed countries provide financing, build capacity and transfer technologies to developing countries as part of international efforts to promote sustainable development because of their historic responsibility, climate change and environmental obstacles to development, and given their financial and technological resources, pursuant to principle 7 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, conerning common but differentiated responsibility. We welcome more vigorous United Nations efforts to assist African countries in development, in particular through the financing of peacebuilding programmes through the Peacebuilding Fund and through cooperation with regional and international financial institutions.

The situations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic require peacebuilding in line with an comprehensive perspective that takes account of the specificities of each of the two countries rather than one model and lessons learned from the past and from experience with the six countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

With respect to peacebuilding under the Charter, Egypt welcomes the United Nations role in democratic transformation, including in Egypt in line with its national priorities. We express our concern regarding the treatment of the situation in Egypt in the report's chapter on international security and peacebuilding. Ours is an internal situation that does not threaten international peace and security. The Secretary-General has said that this is an Egyptian matter and that it is the responsibility of Egyptians to resolve this issue for a better future.

I reaffirm that the Government of Egypt is committed to implementing the road map within the agreed timelines, to holding presidential and parliamentary elections by the deadline of May 2014, and to repudiating terrorism and violence. We accept the principles of the rule of law, respect for human

rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, equality and justice for all.

Regarding justice and international law, Egypt recognizes the importance of respecting the judgement of international law. We believe that peaceful means should be used to settle disputes pursuant to international law, including the International Court of Justice, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and international arbitration. We hope that the international humanitarian summit will be prepared with an agenda that will build national capacities in developing countries so that they will be able to deal with their crises and offer solutions that will promote sustainable development through their national institutions.

Although the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and other resolutions of the General Assembly support the responsibility to protect, the definition of that principle is still subject to different interpretations among Member States out of fear that it will be used in a way that is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore stress that there should be no politicization or pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of States.

Egypt welcomes ongoing social activities to promote women's rights, as highlighted in the report. We would have hoped that the report would have addressed last year's accomplishments, for example in preventing violence against women and violence during conflicts.

We thank the Secretary-General for his work with the Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament, his efforts to promote a fissile material working group, and for his disarmament efforts. We thank him for stressing the humanitarian aspect of nuclear disarmament. He has stated that the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had been welcomed, but has not named the State responsible for quashing it.

We draw attention to our interest in seeing the conference convened on basis of the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as noted by the Secretary-General and the three depositary countries. We reaffirm that the universalization of the NPT is the foundation of the international nuclear disarmament system.

We cannot equate nuclear disarmament with any other issue. The Secretary-General has commented on the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We affirm that countries producing, accumulating, benefiting from and exporting such weapons are the source of that proliferation. Egypt reaffirms that the Arms Trade Treaty must take into account the interests of exporting and importing countries and the right of States to self-defence and to export weapons within legal rules. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the position of the Organization in this area.

We welcome the progress made in administration in the areas of International Public Sector Accounting Standards, Umoja and human-resource management. We support the principle of mobility as long as financial resources are available. We do not want it to be promoted at the expense of the Organization's other priorities, such as development. Egypt is ready to open dialogue with the President and others for specific results at this session as as to move forward in our actions for peace, justice and development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I have had a request from one delegation to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In Kyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am speaking in exercise of the right of reply regarding the Japanese delegation's allegations concerning the abductions issue and the Korean nuclear issue.

First, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I fully reject the preposterous allegation of the Japanese delegation regarding the abductions issue. As we have made clear on several occasions, the issue of the abductions of Japanese was completely and cleanly resolved thanks to our sincere and genuine efforts to implement the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration.

The continued attempts of the Japanese delegation to raise the already resolved abductions issue are part of their entire hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has persisted for half a century and is aimed at hiding their past inhuman crimes against the Korean people. Japan should sincerely atone for its past crimes against humanity, as unanimously demanded by the international community, rather than play tricks with the abductions issue, which has already been resolved.

Secondly, on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, we have already stated several times how the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula originated. The nuclear issue originated because of the United States and its hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States has defined the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an enemy and seeks to eliminate our political system.

My country possesses a nuclear deterrent not because of ambitions but because it had to counter the threat. It has already been reported that, at this very moment, a strike group made up of United States ships — including the large nuclear-powered carrier *USS* George Washington with at least 100 nuclear bombs aboard, many guided-missile destroyers, cruisers, submarines and escort warships — is engaging in a military exercise.

That is why, in exercise of the right of reply to the allegation of the Japanese delegation on the abductions issue and the nuclear issue, I once again reject all allegations made by Japan.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, as contained in document A/68/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 111.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.